

Hello,

My name is Elisabeth Herdic, I am from Canterbury, CT and I support House Bill 6517. My daughter, now 14 is dyslexic and dysgraphic. My husband and I noticed in PreK that although she was verbal and conversed in an appropriate way, she could not learn the sounds of letters, or form them on paper. This went on for years while in the Lebanon Public Schools. Teachers had no idea how to help her and she continued to widen her achievement gap. We spent countless hours researching, paying privately for tutoring, and advocating for the school to take next steps and identification and appropriate education. It wasn't until 4th grade that she was identified. After years of pushing back specifically at a diagnosis, the outside evaluator confirmed all that I had been saying about my child for years. She had wasted years falling further and further behind and losing all sense of self worth and esteem. They were not able to provide any evidence based instructions. Her 4th grade teacher seems to think by yelling at her, and taking away recess for her writing difficulty, she could "fix" everything. This further damaged her self worth. In 5th grade she started attending a private school with Orton Gillingham instruction and small classes. She soared. Now, in 9th grade she is above grade level in reading. That is what 4 years of an evidence based program can accomplish. I like to think that if the teachers were trained in identification and evidence based instruction my daughter would not have had to suffer as she did, our relationships with the school would not have been so negative, and everyone would have worked together to support her. I am disappointed now to be back in the public school system and see that nothing has changed or improved. She now has the skills to advocate for herself, and does when needed. The only way to change this is to start training teachers in college on reading based learning disabilities and correct remediation through evidence based instruction like Orton Gillingham. My daughter is lucky that she has parents that were well educated, passionate, and could afford to pay privately for an education to meet her needs. Countless students do not have this.

I ask that CSDE verify that teacher candidates meet specific dyslexia requirements.

I ask that CSDE out of state teacher applicants meet specific dyslexia requirements.

I ask that CSDE establish a dyslexia in-servicing training program advisory council to evaluate the quality of structured literacy.

Student teaching needs to include pre-service practicum experiences.

There needs to be practicum supervisors in educator preparation.

K-3 screenings need to be aligned with evidence based practices and research.

I ask for all of these items because with all the years that I have been advocating, nothing has been implemented with fidelity. Countless districts were cited by the Dyslexia Task force in failing our students.

Kind Regards,

Elisabeth Herdic